

THE BISHOPS ENCOUEAGE SUPEKSTITION
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Idolatri ye suffer in sundry places many,
And boxes are set forth bounden with iron,
To receive the Toll paid through untrue sacrifice.
In remembrance of miracles much wax is hung on
the shrines.
All the world wot well this could not be true,
But because it is profitable to you purseward,
you prelates
suffer

Ignorant men in misbelief to live and to die.¹ The English prelates as well as the Pope found it to their interest to encourage these * misbeliefs.' St. Peter's was not the first nor the only church built by the proceeds of indulgences. In 1396, for instance, the Chapter of York, needing money to complete their cathedral, obtained from the Pope indulgences which they sold in their diocese ; the proceeds of the sale were to be applied to the building. We have their letter to the provincial clergy of the Archdeaconry of Richmond. They write that they are sending down from York their beloved friend John Beryngton, ' of whose faithfulness and industry we have full confidence in the Lord, to publish and explain the said indulgences and others, conceded by other prelates in this part.' Such cases were common at this period.² The Pardoner who came down with letters from the Church authorities often used the position thus obtained to earn a penny for himself as dealer in magic and spells. Chaucer's Pardoner describes how

First I pronounce whennes that I
come, And than my bulle's shewe I,
alle and somme. That no man be so
bold, ne preest ne clerk, Me to
destourbe of Crist's holy werk. And
after that than telle I forth my tales,
Bulles of Popes and of Cardinales, Of
Patriarkes and bishoppe's I shewe;

latten a shoulder bone
Than have I in latoun a sholder boon
which belonged to the sheep of a holy Jew

¹ Good men,' seye I, ' tak of my wordes
kepe ; If that this boon be wasshe in
any welle, If cow, or calf, or sheep, or
oxe swelle,

¹ P. *PL*, 0, i. lines 66-77, and 96-102; also B, vii. 649, and A,, viii 170

* See Ap.